

UAE residents risk heart problems



Nearly nine out of ten people in the UAE are at risk of cardiovascular disease and one out of three of those is unaware of the fact.

A survey by the Emirates Cardiac Society of more than 4,000 people also revealed that people who discovered they were at risk did not seek medical help, mostly because they did not feel unwell.

Diabetes, hypertension, smoking, high cholesterol, obesity and a family history of cardiovascular disease are all risk factors.

Dr Alawi Alsheikh-Ali, the president of the ECS, said: "The findings are alarming. The risk factors may not have any symptoms and people don't go to doctors because they don't feel unwell."

"It's not part of the culture here to go see the doctor if you have a headache or high blood pressure. People have to understand that they need to check for risk factors."

The study looked at the prevalence of cardiac risk factors, whether screening was useful and what happened when people were made aware of the fact that they had a risk factor.

Dr Alsheikh-Ali said 85 per cent had at least one – with 30 per cent of those screened having high blood pressure, of which only 17 per cent knew of their condition.

"The magnitude of the problem is huge. The second thing is the average age is very low and, as the population ages, there will be huge economic consequences," he said.

Engaging people in the community was the way forward, the cardiologist said. "We can't tell why people are not seeking help. It is maybe because they have no health insurance or people don't perceive it as a risk," Dr Alsheikh-Ali said.

massive
lack of
awareness

don't feel
unwell now
∴ don't
look for medical
help

Dr Alawi
Alsheikh-Ali

In the future - economic problems/
cost.

9/10 at risk!
shocking

all increase
risk

Cultural
cause/
element?

Should
engage/
involve
community

raise awareness by
screening / checking

People
in many
diff. places.

The researchers screened people – three quarters of whom were male and who had an average age of 38 – at four shopping malls, nine healthcare facilities, and three labour camps in five cities in UAE.

Dr Hani Sabbour, consultant cardiologist at Sheikh Khalifa Medical City, said that the incidence of severe heart disease presented itself 11 years earlier in Arabian Gulf countries compared with the United States and Europe.

People
affected
much earlier
here.

"One of the youngest patients I saw was a 19-year-old who had a massive heart attack and had a blocked artery. This is almost unheard of in western medical literature," Dr Sabbour said.

A lot of patients who have heart failure did not know their heart was weak, the doctor said.

"The understanding of the link between heart disease and diabetes and cholesterol is challenging because young people don't have symptoms. Young people think 'I don't feel bad so why should I take medication?'," he said.

Dr Sabbour said that patients might be reluctant to see a doctor, but if they were counselled properly, they would seek help. The problem needed to be addressed very early, Dr Sabbour said.

lack of
awareness

Dr Abdul Razzak Alkaddour, consultant physician and head of the smoke-cessation clinic at Sheikh Khalifa Medical City, said many people did not recognise smoking as a risk factor in cardiac disease.

not enough
prevention,
not enough
education
in schools/
universities

"The culture of prevention does not exist in this part of the world and there is very little education about this in school or at university," he said.

The study, titled Opportunistic Screening for CVD Risk Factors, The Dubai Shopping for Cardiovascular Risk Study, was conducted in 2013 and was released last month in the World Heart Federation's journal, Global Heart.

Link to article: <http://www.thenational.ae/uae/health/uae-residents-risk-heart-problems>

YouGov survey finds heart problems are rife in the UAE

Doctors say they are seeing patients as young as 19 who have had a heart attack.

very young!

It comes as the survey found 32 per cent of residents say they or a family member have a heart problem, while 27 per cent say they or a relative have suffered from cardiovascular disease.

very common

More than half say that they or a family member regularly rely on medication for high blood pressure.

high blood pressure - meds.

"This is quite an alarming rate and should be addressed through aggressive campaigns that highlight the benefits of exercise and how destructive unhealthy lifestyles can be," says Lara Al Barazi, of YouGov.

Dr Jairam K Aithal, a specialist in cardiovascular disease at Burjeel Hospital in Abu Dhabi, has worked in the emirate for five years.

"Cardiac problems are affecting more and more people in the UAE and they are suffering from these problems at a younger age nowadays," Dr Aithal says.

"People should not imagine that they can eat what they like in their 20s and hit the gym when they are 40. My youngest patient who suffered a heart attack was only 19.

"I get many patients of hypertension in their 30s when typically patients used to be in their 40s."

The hectic lifestyle followed by many expatriates can take its toll on heart health, he says. "The UAE has many expats who are here by themselves," Dr Aithal says. "Some have taken loans to work here, others need to fend for themselves or send money home. They have to work long hours.

"These issues take a toll on them and result in them suffering hypertension or high blood pressure."

Lifestyle choices are also at fault.

"There is awareness about obesity and its link to hypertension but not enough is being done to combat these problems or delay their onset," says Dr Aithal. "Prevention is the cure. People need to be told how they can prevent the disease.

"There are some basic steps that people can take to combat hypertension, diabetes and reduce stress levels. These steps will also ensure that people feel positive about themselves."

how to reduce.

work, stress, long hours

awareness & prevention

— diet
The first step is having a good diet.

"One should opt for raw food over processed food," Dr Aithal says. "Having baked or grilled or steamed food is much better than having fried food."

raw ✓ Processed x
baked ✓ Steamed ✓
grilled ✓ fried x

exercise - Regular exercise is as important as a good diet.

do more over weekend.
"If one can't manage 30 minutes of exercise daily because of their schedules, then they should compensate for it over the weekend," says Dr Aithal.

"Also meditating or taking time out for a hobby helps reduce stress levels. Paint, read, play a sport — just get involved in a hobby. *reduce stress*

sleep "Sleeping for at least seven to eight hours is important. Last but not least, laughing is very healthy."

Cardiovascular disease and hypertension will be topics on which Arab Health will focus this year, says Lisa Stephens, its executive director.

45% deaths in Gulf
"Cardiovascular diseases cause 45 per cent of early deaths in the Gulf region alone and with the disease rarely showing any symptoms, the importance of screening and early detection is paramount," Ms Stephens said. *need screening programs.*

"The prevalence of hypertension globally, according to the World Health Organisation, is extremely high, with one in three people affected.

She says that recent studies have shown that the prevalence of the disease is far higher in Arabian Gulf countries.

"Affordability of medication, compliance with treatment and the barriers of lifestyle changes are key concerns for the region."

<http://www.thenational.ae/uae/health/yougov-survey-finds-heart-problems-are-rife-in-the-uae>

Survey finds UAE residents are forsaking exercise

no exercise!
1 in 3!

One in three residents admit that they take no physical exercise, and many more told the YouGov poll they do less than the recommended amount.

This is despite experts saying inactive lifestyles can lead to some of the biggest health problems in the region, such as obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease. “ ”

“If people are not exercising they are following an unhealthy lifestyle and it is bad for them,” says Dr Anita Das Gupta, a clinical dietician at Abu Dhabi’s Burjeel Hospital.

obesity link
“Walking, running and dancing are all exercise and one should ensure they are active. If they don’t they will become obese, and obesity is linked to osteoporosis and cardiovascular disorders, to name but a couple.”

The YouGov health survey, commissioned by The National, polled 1,031 people from across the UAE.

It aimed to provide a broad look at health issues, including lifestyle, diseases and how medical services are evolving, and gain personal feedback from visits to healthcare centres.

32% do nothing.
26% only 1-2 hr/wk
The survey found that 32 per cent of respondents do not exercise at all and another 26 per cent only exercise one or two hours a week.

International guidelines recommend at least half an hour of exercise a day to stay healthy.

recommend
min. ½ hr/day
exercise.

“Taking exercise seriously is important,” says Dr Gupta. “Instead of chatting with friends, take a brisk walk and focus on it. Even if one exercises for 20 minutes daily it will help. They will also feel positive about themselves.”

Omer Odhan, 58, says he does not exercise at all.

The Abu Dhabi resident says his job as a banker requires him to travel to Dubai every day of the week and he struggles for time.

job, travel,
lack
time.
e.g.

“My job does not allow me to take any exercise or sport,” Mr Odhan says. “I am too busy.”

A quarter of respondents dedicate three to five hours a week for exercising. Eighteen per cent are more committed and exercise six hours a week.

“The American Heart Association recommends at least 150 minutes a week of moderate exercise or 75 minutes a week of vigorous exercise to improve cardiovascular health,” says Lisa Stephens,

executive director of Arab Health, the largest health exhibition and medical congress in the Middle East.

The survey found westerners are most likely to exercise, compared with Emiratis and Arab and Asian expatriates, while those aged over 40 are more likely to be active than younger residents.

Sharjah residents were the most sedentary of all.

The most common exercise is walking, practised by 73 per cent of those who say they are active.

And the interest in walking increases with age. Eighty-two per cent who are above 40 years old exercise through walking, as opposed to 62 per cent of those aged 18 to 24.

One in three who exercise like to run. This is especially evident among the 25 to 29 year age group, with almost half (49 per cent) running regularly.

Going to the gym, swimming and yoga are other types of exercise residents do to keep fit.

But cycling was found to be the least common pastime.

"This shows that a considerable portion of the UAE society leads a sedentary life, which might be due to several reasons – be it the long working hours, the weather or the lack of encouragement," says Lara Al Barazi, YouGov associate research director.

"This should be an incentive for authorities, sponsors and even health insurance companies to encourage exercise and show the benefits of what a couple of active hours a week can do."

Of the 1,031 respondents, 168 were Emiratis, 209 Arab expatriates, 534 Asian expatriates and 99 westerners. The remaining 21 were of other nationalities.

<http://www.thenational.ae/uae/health/survey-finds-uae-residents-are-forsaking-exercise>

Cultural reasons? - traditions?

examples of exercise.

sedentary = not moving
sitting all the time

More young people in UAE being struck by heart attacks

Patients as young as 21 are having cardiovascular disease diagnosed, medical professionals say.

very young

To mark World Heart Day on Tuesday, the doctors have warned that lifestyle choices are leading to an increase in heart conditions in patients under the age of 40.

Contributing factors include easy access to deliverable fast food and widespread smoking, fuelled by low-cost cigarettes, they said.

fast food
smoking
cheap cigs.

A survey of 491 male labourers at Rashid Hospital found 60 per cent had an unhealthy body mass index that put them at risk of heart attack or stroke.

Indian cardiologist Dr Joseph Sebastian, who works at the City Centre Clinic in Dubai and has 30 years' experience in the field, said: "Nowadays, more and more 30 and 40 year olds are suffering heart attacks.

"My youngest patient was only 21 years old when he had his first heart attack. He was a severe case and needed coronary angiography, angioplasty and stenting.

"This particular young patient was a very heavy smoker and had a family history, with his father dying from a heart attack at the young age of 43."

family
history.
(genetics)

About 40 per cent of his CVD patients are under the age of 40, he added.

"Smoking remains a major contributing force behind high incidence of cardio vascular disease in the UAE," he said.

Heart disease and strokes are the world's leading causes of death, claiming 17.3 million lives each year.

World Heart Day takes place annually on September 29 and is a chance to spread the healthy intervention message.

raise
awareness

Health screenings conducted by Medeor 24x7 Hospital of more than 1,500 people in Abu Dhabi showed almost half were overweight and an additional 20 per cent were obese.

overweight/
obese is
Abu
Dhabi

"Heart disease is manifesting in young and middle-aged people, especially with obesity, Type 2 diabetes and hypertension on the rise in younger people," said Dr Stanley George, a cardiologist at Medeor 24x7 Hospital, Dubai.

related
problems
obesity
Type 2 diabetes

One of Dr George's patients, father of two Nery Betelho, 59, a manager at Citizen watches in Dubai, tried to lead a healthy life playing hockey, football and by running.

He was also a non-smoker, so was surprised when he was struck down with chest pain when he was out for a jog.

Doctors diagnosed an arterial blockage and Mr Betelho was booked in for a triple heart bypass operation.

"It wasn't a heart attack, but I could feel my veins pulling," he said.

"My dad died at 81, but he had heart problems and was a chain smoker. Doctors said my issues could have been because of a high sugar diet."

Of the 491 men screened at Rashid Hospital aged between 25 and 55, 75 per cent had high cholesterol, and 9 per cent had undiagnosed diabetes, 60 per cent of the men had a body mass index over 24, and were at an increased risk of a heart attack or a stroke.

- A healthy BMI in adults is suggested between 18.5 and 24.9. The measure is a key indicator of those at risk of cardio vascular related conditions.

Dr Fahad Omar Baslaib, cardiac consultant at Rashid Hospital, said: "We conduct health screenings throughout the year to reach as many people in the UAE as possible and educate them on risk factors and ways in which heart complications can be prevented."

Dubai Health Authority cardiologists will discuss the importance of taking precautions to prevent heart problems via a Twitter clinic this week.

raise awareness - Twitter / social media

<http://www.thenational.ae/uae/health/more-young-people-in-uae-being-struck-by-heart-attacks>

did exercise but heart -
Problem - high sugar diet.

high B.M.I.

75% high cholesterol
9% didn't know had diabetes!

need to educate

Heart disease was the top killer in Abu Dhabi last year

Cardiovascular disease was the leading cause of death in the emirate last year, followed by injuries and cancer.

Abu Dhabi has high rates of lifestyle-related diseases such as obesity and diabetes, but cardiovascular diseases accounted for 36.7 per cent of 3,015 deaths last year, according to the Health Authority Abu Dhabi.

"Without major changes, these rates are set to increase further as the young population ages," the authority said.

Dr Georgie Thomas, a cardiologist at Burjeel Hospital, said he was not surprised that heart disease was the leading killer, given the lifestyles of UAE residents. "It is becoming a leading killer all over the world and we are not an exception," he said.

Work-related stress, smoking, poor diets and lack of exercise amount to self-destruction. "It's actually killing us," he said,

People need 1,800 calories in a typical day, but consumption of fizzy drinks and unhealthy foods increase their calorie intake. "What we consume is close to 6,000 to 7,000 calories a day," he said.

Injuries caused 19.6 per cent of deaths last year, with road accidents making up 62 per cent of 485 injury-related deaths. Falls or falling objects accounted for 11 per cent of such deaths, and suicides 8 per cent.

Meanwhile, occupational injuries caused 18.4 per cent of overall deaths, while childhood injuries caused 12.2 per cent of overall deaths.

Cancer caused 12.9 per cent of deaths last year in the emirate, chiefly breast, colorectal, lymphoid and haematopoietic cancers.

The authority's plan to prioritise disease prevention is an important step when healthcare systems around the world historically focus on treatment, said Amer Al Kindi, an expert on healthcare policy.

The benefits that accrue from disease-prevention schemes might not be obvious but they would have a positive influence on society, said Mr Al Kindi.

"There is a lack of an event and people tend to overlook these benefits. They take them for granted," he said.

Disease prevention requires collaboration with government agencies in education, transport, urban planning, environment and law enforcement.

related problems

not just UAE

diet

in past, focus on treatment.

More than cancer.

need changes or get worse

causes

need to focus on prevention (stopping problem b4 it starts)

groups/authorities need to work together.

will
take
time

But it can take decades to yield the rewards. In Australia, it took 40 years to bring about positive results from smoking-cessation campaigns.

"You have to start now and be consistent, but you have to be patient. It takes many years to see change," said Mr Al Kindi.

<http://www.thenational.ae/uae/health/heart-disease-was-the-top-killer-in-abu-dhabi-last-year>

Emily Cleland
May 7 2013b

UAE children more obese than US, with 30% in Abu Dhabi overweight

5 Nearly a third of schoolchildren in Abu Dhabi are obese or overweight, but progress is being made in improving the eating and exercise habits of the young, the emirate's health authority has said.

Thirty per cent of six to 18-year-olds are either obese or overweight, according to the latest statistics from Health Authority Abu Dhabi (Haad).

10 And nearly 10 per cent of children under the age of five in the emirate are anaemic, according to a 2010 study.

UAE schoolchildren are 1.8 times more obese than US children, studies conducted by the cardiology department at the Saif Bin Ghubash Hospital in Ras Al Khaimah concluded.

15 Despite this, Haad said its school-based "Eat Right, Get Active" programme, which aims to improve the health of pupils through healthy eating habits and physical activity, is achieving results.

"The programme was brought in because there are challenges in eating habits and physical activity in Abu Dhabi among children," said Dr Jennifer Moore, the section head for maternal and child health at Haad.

20 "It's important for children to learn healthy behaviours early on in their life about healthy eating and physical activity.

"Since we started the programme, we have been incredibly impressed with the amazing work that the schools have done."

25 More than 60 schools have participated in the initiative since its launch in 2011, and new schools are joining steadily. Each one conducts a pre and post-implementation assessment. This assessment looks at the diet and exercise habits in each school. The results show significant improvements, Haad said.

The percentage of schools offering at least three physical exercise classes of 40 minutes per week rose from 33 per cent to 60 per cent, for example, and the percentage of schools offering sports programmes after school hours rose from 26 per cent to 46 per cent.

30 Monthly healthy-eating awareness sessions went from being held at 78 per cent of schools to 92 per cent of them, and the availability of healthy eating options at school premises - in canteens, vending machines and during events, rose from 64.3 to 71.4 per cent.

Focus groups have been held with schools, Dr Moore said, to find out what challenges they are facing.

1/3 A.D. kids
obese/overweight

Nearly 2x
more obese
than US!

Programme/
Campaign in
schools.

" "
:
:
:
fewer probs
later.

more P.E.

available
healthy
food
not just
in
schools!

35 "They have raised things like needing to get parents more involved in actually providing the healthy food - both at school but also at home," she said.

"It's very important to have a school programme that's supported by parent involvement, because children are at school and then they go home and they eat the food that's served at home."

40 Held under the patronage of Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak, the programme is a collaborative effort between Haad, Abu Dhabi Education Council, Abu Dhabi Food Control Authority and Ambulatory Healthcare Services.

Dr Ahed Bisharat, a consultant paediatrician at Abu Dhabi's Burjeel Hospital, said the number of obese or overweight children in the emirate is a **concern**.

45 "It's worrying because the style of life now is different than before," he said. "They have junk food more than before and a **sedentary** life - they don't exercise."

junk food
- sedentary
life
- no exercise.

"It's a big problem in Abu Dhabi and they should work on this as soon as possible. This can lead to many, many health problems later in life. These health problems will cause many difficulties for the lives of people, as well as for the country."

Conclusion. Not just about the person.

50 Obese children can get high blood pressure and high cholesterol, Dr Bisharat said, and are also more prone to developing conditions such as cardiovascular disease, kidney problems and Type 2 diabetes in adulthood.

He recommended a balanced diet containing foods such as chicken, meat, milk, eggs and vegetables.

55 <http://www.thenational.ae/news/uae-news/health/uae-children-more-obese-than-us-with-30-in-abu-dhabi-overweight>

Emily Cleland
March 30 2013



LSC 1103

Health problems 2

Read the second article about family health problems in the UAE. What health problems does the article mention?

even kids don't exercise — hoverboards!

Two in five children do not exercise, survey finds

Two fifths of children living in the UAE do no exercise at all – and youngsters in Abu Dhabi are less active than those in Dubai.

Forty one per cent of parents surveyed for Al Aan TV's *Nabd Al Arab* (Arabs' Pulse) programme and *The National* by YouGov said that their children did not take part in any form of exercise or physical activity.

Of the 481 Dubai parents questioned, 69 per cent said their offspring exercised, compared with 50 per cent of 254 Abu Dhabi parents. In Sharjah, 53 per cent said their children took part in physical activity.

Jamal Rahima, a Syrian father of two in Abu Dhabi, said parents should make time to ensure their children get the chance to exercise.

parents need to make sure their kids exercise

"Life is very stressful and our time is really limited but your children are the most important thing," he said. "You need to give them the most important thing in your life, which is time."

The 33-year-old, who has lived in Abu Dhabi for 22 years, regularly takes his children, aged seven and two, to the Corniche, where they cycle, and to the park to play ball.

"I think it's healthy, first of all, to move their muscles," Mr Rahima said. "It's the kids' nature – they want to jump, run and jog."

"We have all over the Corniche to cycle and to jog. Let's not forget the nice beach where they can swim."

Syed Sajid said he takes his three children, who are 14, 11 and 5, to the park every weekend in Abu Dhabi, where they play cricket and football, as well as run around.

The 48-year-old, from India, was surprised so few children do the same, adding: "There are a lot of facilities available but maybe boys and girls tend to go to the mall, rather than gardens and playing areas."

Physical education classes and related activities in school were the biggest source of activity for UAE youngsters in the survey, with 47 per cent of active children taking part.

People don't use facilities. Kids prefer mall.

Walking was second, with 44 per cent, and football, cricket and basketball with 43 per cent of children who exercise participating. Other activities included swimming, jogging and cycling.

Dr Ahed Bisharat, a consultant paediatrician at Burjeel Hospital in the capital, said children should do at least an hour of exercise every day. Physical activity was important to increase the metabolism and blood supply to organs, he said, pointing out that a lack of exercise in children is linked to the development of a fatty liver in later life, which can lead to cirrhosis.

Exercise is also good for combating the onset of Type 2 diabetes.

<http://www.thenational.ae/news/uae-news/health/two-in-five-children-do-not-exercise-survey-finds>

Kids need
1 hr/day
exercise